

Environmental Studies Executive Committee Report to the Faculty, 2009

The Environmental Studies Executive Committee convened three times in Academic Year 2008-9.

In Fall semester, the committee met to vote on magna and summa cum laude honors for qualified students graduating early.

In Spring semester, one meeting was devoted to voting on student honors for those graduating in May 2009.

A second Spring meeting was convened to address the chemistry requirement for the Env. Studies major. About 40% of Env. Studies majors, have as their primary major something other than a natural science. Courses that normally meet the chemistry requirement (Core #5) are Chemistry 1, 2, or 8 (Environmental Chemistry). Of these the most appropriate course for non-science major students to take for meeting the chemistry requirement is Chemistry 8. However Chem 8 is only taught in alternate years. With increasing numbers of our students traveling abroad, it is becoming more common for our majors (whose primary major is not a natural science) to discover that they will not be on Tufts campus the year Chem 8 is offered. That can leave them with the choice of taking a highly competitive Chem 1 or 2, designed for students majoring in natural sciences or pursuing health careers, or of dropping Env. Studies for lack on one course. Chemistry, or the lack of an annually accessible chemistry course, should not shut out new students from developing environmental literacy, especially when more students than ever are coming to Tufts with environmental interest and experience, without intending to take a primary major in the natural sciences. Such students often go on to law school or policy-oriented work making them some of the strongest most visible environmental advocates and alumni. The committee decided to pursue the option (with the Academic Review Board and with DARS) of including Environmental Toxicology (Civil Engineering 167) as an option for meeting the core chemistry requirement in Environmental Studies. It covers chemical principles applied to human and environmental health, methods of risk assessment, and is offered annually.

Representatives of the committee met with Carol Downing of the DARS support team to feed the multidisciplinary Env. Studies second major into the degree audit system. Thus, our Internship requirement is now recorded by contacting the DARS support team when a student completes their Env. Studies internship (including their summary and evaluation of their internship which they submit to the Director of Env. Studies). Going forward, transfer of credit (from SIT and other study-abroad programs) will be assigned the Tufts course equivalent of Env 310 for non-major credit, Env 320 for lower-level Env. Studies credit, and Env. 330 for upper-level Env Studies credit, with comments submitted to the DARS support team by the Director of Env. Studies as to which requirements (if any) can be filled by the transferred course.

Prof. George Ellmore, Chair and Director of Env. Studies Program